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taboo attached to the *wevnē-* relationship, there is a feeling of 'shame' between them which persists throughout life. They would be 'ashamed' to talk to each other without other people present. If a man's *wevnē-* calls him to come and take some food from her he may do so, but more probably he will be 'ashamed' and will pretend not to hear her.

Jokes on sexual subjects may not be passed by anybody with a woman in the presence of her brother. But traditional stories involving sexual situations were told me freely by persons of both sexes in the presence of their *wevnē-*. It is not correct to bandy with a woman, while her brother is present, certain slightly improper words, which in the general way are looked upon much as we look on slang.[1] Still less should expressions which are actually regarded as obscene be used under these circumstances. One day a man living near me, in a rage with his wife, accused her of having improper relations with another man, using one of these expressions. Her brother overheard it, and was furious, not at such things having been said to his sister, but at their having been said in his hearing. He said he would go away, and then her husband could swear at her as much as he liked. He did actually leave the village, and did not return for several days, staying meanwhile with some people who were camping at the taro garden.

6. *Wagun* (term used reciprocally).

The use of this term and the next following will be best understood if considered in the light of the explanation given of the application of the terms *kiar* and *wevnē-*. *Wagun* is employed by males in reference to females and by females in reference to males, never between persons of the same sex. A man applies it to the wife of any one he calls *kiar*, and a wife to any one her husband calls *kiar*. We might say it applies to 'in-laws' of the same generation as the speaker but of the opposite sex.

[1] The existence of this rule I learnt by breaking it. There is a certain word, *biak*, an abbreviation of *bibiak*, which means 'faeces', but is used much as we use the expression 'Rot!' to indicate jocular disbelief in something that has been said. Having been taught this by Marotē as the proper retort to make on a previous occasion, I once jokingly countered with it a remark of her own. She immediately became quite serious and changed the subject. When she had me alone she explained that I ought not to have said it to her while her brother was listening. I was forgiven on the score of ignorance, and obtained much enlightenment on the rules of the *wevnē-* relationship as the result of my innocent breach of good manners.

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aromatic leaves. Then they bring it into the village and put it in the hut of the boy's mother. The boy's mother catches a pig and cooks it. The men and women who helped with the platform must be given pig to eat all together. The platform is laid down inside the house. 585

Then all the women who stand in the relation of *watʃitʃio* to the boy (see Chap. II, p. 68, for this relationship) go and lie on the platform in couples, holding each other fast. Each couple pretends to be husband and wife, who play at copulating with each other. When one couple has been lying on the platform for a while they get up and another pair take their places, till all the boy's *watʃitʃio* have taken part in the performance. 585 831

When this is finished, all the men and women of the boy's village adorn themselves with paint and put on the mark called *wakai*—a line of white outlining the edge of the hair and the forehead. Then they all go to the girl's village. They *kōma* along the road. The people of the girl's village have been similarly adorning themselves and they also *kōma*. They ornament the girl with the *wakai* line and with a clam-shell nose ornament, and hang strings of *beroan* across her shoulders and round her waist. 585 302 [301]

The people from the boy's village reach the girl's village just after dark. They *kōma* as they come. They join in the *kōma* at the girl's village. All the people of both villages stand up together and *kōma*. But the boy and the girl do not join in it, they hide in different huts, and are not allowed to come out. The boy's mother joins in the *kōma*, but the girl's mother stays with her daughter inside her own hut. This goes on all night. 585

Just before dawn breaks, one of the girl's male relatives takes up the boy on his shoulder (*watok*). This duty must not be performed by the girl's *tsoa*, who is *waris* to the girl's husband and cannot touch him. It is usually undertaken by one of the men who will be *tauwē* to the husband, i.e. his wife's brother, blood or classificatory. He is assisted by men of the boy's clan, who place their hands under the boy's buttocks and take some of the weight. The corresponding relative of the boy, who is *tauwē* to the girl, i.e. her husband's sister, takes up the girl on her shoulders in the same way, and is similarly assisted by members of the girl's clan. The heads of both boy and girl are ornamented with cock's feathers, and strings of *beroan* are hung across their shoulders. *Beroan* is also hung over both the wrists of the boy, but not of the girl. 585 482 [301]

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it is not the woman that is bought, but the right to use her body for the satisfaction of the husband and the procreation of children by him. With this the man also acquires the right to be looked after and provided with food properly prepared, and failure on the part of the wife in these respects is regarded as ground for divorce. It is a wife, as distinct from a woman in her capacity as an individual, that is purchased when the strings of ceremonial currency pass from the bridegroom's family to that of the bride. She is not thereby prevented from being a person with rights of her own in the community, for her position in this society is far from being a negligible one, as will be seen from other portions of this book. My impression is that while they definitely regard the handing over of the ceremonial currency as a commercial transaction, it is not in any way detrimental to the dignity of the woman, nor does this point of view react unfavourably on her status in the community.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SEXES PRIOR TO MARRIAGE

It will be noted that there is no feature in the series of betrothal ceremonies, nor in the final ceremony preceding the consummation of the marriage, involving a test of the girl's virginity. The question was never brought up spontaneously by the natives in our conversations regarding various aspects of sex and marr[illegible] and the lack of response to such guarded inquiries as I made—direct questions being liable to produce misleading results—would seem to indicate that the matter is not considered of primary importance. It is noteworthy, too, that out of several hundred folk-tales and legends in my collection not a single one has any bearing on this point, though practically every other aspect of the sexual life is illustrated therein. Two cases of rape occur in my records, but both were attended by special circumstances. One, complicated by incest, has already been discussed (p. 77). The other (referred to on p. 230) concerned a girl who had attained adult years without being married owing to a deformity. Perhaps the fact that in the past it was only exceptionally that a girl was not claimed by a husband at or before sexual maturity accounts for the absence of stress on the subject. Nowadays, in the more sophisticated villages, where the age of marriage is getting appreciably later, and some freedom of choice as to whether a girl marries or not is just possible, a new situation is arising. In the few such cases known

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though he did not know why. Her relatives would not consent to the match, they said her husband might want her back. As it was near the end of my period of residence, I did not hear whether anything further was done in the matter. In another case, in which all the principals were personally known to me, that of Kakari's marriage to Muben, the match was suggested by Muben's *tsoa* (actually the mother's mother's sister's son, but equivalent to the mother's brother). He lived at Kurtatchi, but actually belonged to Baniu, where Muben's mother lived. He was very ambitious, and clearly wanted the marriage because it allied him to the most important family in the district. That is to say, while the initiative usually rests with the boy's family, it may, on occasion, be taken by some relative of the bride's. Again, Pinari, who liked to exercise his authority, saw to it that he had a say in the case of betrothals of any of the young people in his village, even of those not closely related to him, and as he was *tsunaun tʃan*, deference was paid to his views.

The betrothal is not absolutely binding until the ceremonial currency has been handed over by the boy's people. This may be done while the girl is still quite small, but it is not necessary, or usual, to do so until her breasts begin to develop. Once arranged, a betrothal is seldom broken, even before the currency has changed hands, and to break it after that is a serious matter. A case came to my notice where a man fell in love with a girl who was already betrothed, and eventually ran away with her. Although the ceremonial exchanges connected with the prospective marriage had not been completed, the affair was regarded as a serious breach of customary rule, but it was finally settled by a payment of ceremonial currency from the lover to the girl's affianced husband. The couple have been living very happily together for several years. They have one child, a boy about a year old, whom both adore. It seems to be a genuine love match, a somewhat rare occurrence among these people.

At the time of betrothal, the boy may be considerably older than the girl, and may have finished his puberty ceremonies and taken off the *upi*, or he may be only slightly older and continue to wear the *upi* for several years subsequently. All except the youngest boys wearing the *upi* at Kurtatchi were already betrothed. The marriage is never consummated till the puberty ceremonies are finished and the *upi* removed, and usually not until the girl has

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the bush. Here it is not always convenient to lie down, so a standing position is adopted, the man behind the woman who bends her body forward. I have two drawings, both done by young men, showing couples in this position, and on one occasion when I observed children playing at copulation it was done thus.

The bush is the favourite place for love-making. The taro garden is frequently chosen by husband and wife; clandestine lovers prefer the uncleared bush. This preference is the basis of some of the stock insults current among these people. A person of either sex who is angry with a woman will say to her: '*Wanits i ratsu.*' 'You copulate in the bush', or '*Giug i ratsu.*' 'You conceive in the bush.' (These are indicatives, not imperatives.)[1]

As far as I know, there are no periods of special licence, nor is there any occasion on which extra-marital intercourse is either enjoined or sanctioned with ritual significance, unless we include the punishment of a woman in this manner for breaking taboos connected with the boys' puberty rites (see Chap. VI).

Sexual abstinence is imposed upon certain individuals under special circumstances, but I do not know of any time when the prohibition is general. A woman must refrain from intercourse for some time after the birth of a child. The young men who act as sponsors (*amro*) to the adolescent boys wearing the *upi* must remain continent during certain stages of the puberty rites. Abstinence during the previous night is essential if a man wishes to succeed in bonito fishing, but there are 'medicines' whereby the result of breaking this taboo may be circumvented.

PROSTITUTION

I learned of nothing that could be described as prostitution occurring among these people, as is perhaps to be expected in a community where a partner can be obtained without difficulty. Presents of tobacco, betel, &c., will sometimes pass between lovers, but these are signs of preference, not payment for services rendered. In most villages there are some women who are known to be liberal with their favours, usually these are young wives whose husbands are away working as indentured labourers.

[1] Other stock insults are concerned with incestuous relationships and with faeces, just as in other parts of Melanesia. Typical examples are '*No en sas a tin a tfinamen!*' 'Go eat your mother's faeces!' '*Tetop tfinan!*' 'Copulate with your mother!'

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When I showed my friends at Kurtatchi the photographs I had taken during a visit to the Kunua mountain natives, the first thing they noticed was the absence of loin-cloths. The women asked particularly if I had seen the Kunua women's pubic hair. On being answered in the affirmative, they seemed quite horrified, and both men and women hastened to explain that the Kunua people were only 'bush Kanakas' who did not know any better. Yet scarcely more than a few years ago they were following exactly the same fashion themselves. 834

Since the upper portion of their bodies is not covered, there is no such feeling connected with the breasts. Remarks will be passed on their shape, &c., entirely devoid of sexual implication, just as we might criticize a person's nose or eyes. The breasts do not figure in the tales, and, so far as I can learn, do not bulk largely in native love-making, though firm upstanding breasts are, as has been previously stated, considered a beauty. 826

In attempting to investigate the reactions of these people towards matters connected with sex, and to obtain information regarding sexual practices, I never encountered any hesitation or reticence, on the part of either men or women, whether by themselves or in mixed company. Many were quite willing to give their own personal experiences, and the details are, besides, often common knowledge throughout the village. The marital histories I have cited for illustration, when not based on personal observation or on information arising out of the collection of genealogies, were either given by the individuals concerned, or by other people in the village. All the persons mentioned were well known to me personally, unless otherwise stated. 831 ● 124

But while willing enough to talk, they have great difficulty in putting their ideas into words, even in their own language, as soon as one tries to go beyond mere concrete description. In such inarticulateness they are, of course, by no means unique. I found it more pronounced in the women than in the men, and it was, far more than shyness or opposition, my chief difficulty throughout the whole investigation. 521 124

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IV

PREGNANCY AND CHILD-BIRTH

KNOWLEDGE OF PATERNITY

842 IT will be evident from what has been said in the preceding chapter concerning the attitude of these natives to extra-marital intercourse when it results in pregnancy, that they are aware of the connexion between copulation and conception. They say, of the man, *wataputs bai'i*, which may be translated 'he makes the child come up', *wataputs* being also used in the sense of 'to go and fetch', and *taputs* without the causative prefix *wa-* meaning 'to come at a person's call'. Of the woman, it is said *mon to giug non*, 'the woman is pregnant'. The same terms are applied to animals. There is abundant evidence of their knowledge in their conversations and in their tales. One of these, for example, deals with a 842 woman whose husband was impotent. She begs him to let her go, 837 so that she can marry a man by whom she can have a child. He 848 refuses, and she takes a lover in the bush, by whom she becomes 586 pregnant. Her husband says: 'Who has made you pregnant? I know the child is not mine, because I cannot have coitus with you.' When the child is born the husband kills it, and the woman divorces him and marries her lover.

842 Their knowledge, however, does not seem to go beyond the necessity for copulation. The child is thought to be formed out of the woman's blood. This idea may possibly have been suggested by the cessation of the menses during pregnancy since this causal relationship is recognized by them. On the part of the man, pene- [831] tration is thought to be the essential factor. The seminal fluid is looked upon as water, and there is complete ignorance as to the function of the testicles. Village gossip has it that there was a man—now dead—in a neighbouring village whose penis was destroyed by a sore. He made an artificial one of wood, by means of which he copulated with his wife, who produced offspring. The name of one of his sons still living was adduced as proof of the truth of the story, the obvious explanation apparently not being applied to this case. There are other indications of the

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has been fixed there for the purpose. The 'opossum girl' is sitting above her on top of the bunch of fruit.

Then all the women bring the ceremonial pudding they have prepared, and plenty of cooked taro, drinking coco-nuts and dry coco-nuts, and special kinds of taro uncooked with the stalk still attached. These are painted with stripes of black and red. All the things are heaped up at the foot of the banana palm. Meanwhile, all the women *kōma*, shouting as loud as they can.

Then the 'opossum girl' breaks off one banana from the bunch and throws it at the women as they go round in the *kōma*. They are all glad, and shout. Then another woman climbs up the tree and breaks off a banana and throws it. Then all the women start throwing things at one another, limes, canarium almonds, if they are in season, pawpaws, mangoes, areca-nuts, and so on. They play together because they are glad that the girl has begun to menstruate. She herself stays up in the tree and takes no part in the game. This goes on for some time.

When the throwing is finished, the girl puts on two hoods, one plain, the other with a pattern worked on it with strips of fibre (these special hoods, called *tsububuwat*, are made on Buka and obtained by barter). All the women now gather as close as possible to the banana palm, and continue to *kōma* loudly. One of them cuts down the banana palm near the ground. All the women hold up their hands to catch the tree as it falls. They lower it gently to the ground with the two girls still sitting in it. The conch-shell is blown, the slit-gong is beaten with the same rhythm as before, and all the women shout. Some of them catch hold of the girl and carry her into the hut. She must not touch the ground. Other women call out to the 'opossum girl' to hold tight to the bunch of bananas. The tree is laid on the ground with the 'opossum girl' still clinging to it. Its leaves are then pulled off and the 'opossum girl' is covered up with them.

Then the women all play at copulating with one another. One woman makes another woman lie on the ground, at the foot of the prostrate banana palm, she then lies on the top of her and pretends to have coitus. But they must not play at coitus with the girl for whom the ceremony is being held. She must stay inside the hut and take no part in the play. Some one seizes the 'opossum girl' and runs off with her into the hut; she is too small to play at coitus with the women. Then the women get hold of bits of ceremonial

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pudding and pieces of pig, and rub them on to their genitals, and then on one another's mouths, with the secretion from the vulva adhering to them. The women are obliged to eat these pieces. If any one refuses she is held down, her mouth forced open, and the food pushed into it.

When the women have had enough of this sexual play, the visiting women are all given quantities of food to take back with them. They then disperse to their own villages. The whole of this part of the ceremony, involving the banana palm, is performed only for persons of rank.

The three children, i.e. the girl for whom the ceremony is being performed, the one who acted as 'opossum girl', and her other companion, remain inside the hut for a few days more. The exact period was not specified; my informants said it did not matter very much. They may now eat taro which has been roasted in the embers or cooked in an oven, but not that which has been boiled in a pot. They may not eat the meat of a green coco-nut, but they may break open ripe ('dry') coco-nuts and cook them in the embers like taro, then scrape the meat off them; this they may eat. (In the ordinary way the meat of a coco-nut at this stage is not considered fit to eat.) If the girl who has been menstruating eats green coco-nuts or taro that has been boiled in water, she will have another period in a short time, and will lose too much blood. The same prohibition applies to taro leaves, which these people are accustomed to boil and eat as we eat spinach. These are liable to have the same effect, being cooked in water, but the leaves may be made into a package tied up with covering leaves, and roasted in the embers; in this form, since they are cooked dry, she is permitted to eat them. But she is absolutely forbidden to eat pig, fish, or opossum, which amounts to the prohibition of all flesh foods.

When a few days have passed, the girl's mother prepares a special pot of taro, called *pipiro*. One *roran* (six tubers) of each of several different kinds of taro is taken and boiled in a pot with certain aromatic leaves. Taro thus prepared is esteemed a great delicacy. The men go fishing, and bring in certain kinds of fish. The names of fourteen kinds of fish were given to me in this connexion. They were all rather small fish, so far as I could ascertain. No reason could be elicited for choosing these particular kinds. They are brought into the village; the girl's mother wraps them up in the large leaves of the bush banana, which are much used in

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159 881 one piece, and gave some to the two children, and some to Kiots. The village is now free to eat what it pleases, but Nawi must still eat sparingly. She may not yet come out of the hut.

All the proceedings were over quite early in the morning, and every one dispersed as usual; there was no lounging about the place as there was yesterday. In the evening there was a *kōma* of the usual kind, with slit-gong and *mabu* and *piu*. The women of Nawi's clan were not allowed to take part in it, but those of the other clan did so.

September 15. Nawi and the two little girls still confined to the hut. Village at work as usual. No special features, and no *kōma* at night.

September 16. Nothing happened till shortly before dusk, when [831] some of the women came to fetch me to go to Nawi's hut. All the women of the village gathered there, and engaged in romping and horse-play, the sexual nature of which was somewhat more veiled than in the account previously given, consisting chiefly of some women lying flat on the ground and others jumping on them. Then all present, including myself, drank, from a bamboo, a mixture out of a receptacle that had been set up on a stand inside the hut. (The ingredients of this I afterwards obtained from its maker, they will be discussed later.) No men were present at this part of the proceedings. All the women still wore their cordyline leaves. After every one had drunk, there was more romping, during which pieces of pig and taro were thrown about. This went on for some time. Then there was an interval during which every one sat around and talked.

159 881 535 When it was quite dark the men began blowing the pipes, both *mabu* and *piu* (see pp. 411–12). The women, all wearing their hoods, collected in the central space of the village, and called to me to join them. We walked backwards and forwards towards and away from the men who were playing, then walked all round them, then along the back of the line of huts (*babots*), to Nawi's mother's hut. Nawi came out. A coco-nut shell filled with water was handed round. Some of the women drank, some held it to their mouths without swallowing any. Then we all stood in a group, close together, facing east, and yelled 'Ba-a-a-a-a-h'. The whole group turned round to face west, and yelled again. Then all, including Nawi, went back to the central space where the men were still playing, and danced with a peculiar step, a hop coming down on